

**LAKELAND LIBRARY COOPERATIVE
GRANTS COMMITTEE MINUTES – Official
Wednesday, September 18, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.
Lakeland Library Cooperative, Grand Rapids, MI**

Present: Teresa Kline (Chair), Marla Ehlers, Bethany Nettleton, Jackie Roseberry

Absent: Heather Wood-Gramza

Staff: Carol Dawe, Janet Cornell, Kelly Schroeder

Guest: Wendy Falb

- 1) **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL:** The meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m. by Teresa Kline, Chair.
- 2) **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Marla Ehlers moved, supported by Bethany Nettleton, to approve the agenda as presented - *motion carried*.
- 3) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Marla Ehlers moved, supported by Bethany Nettleton, to approve the Grants Committee minutes from June 26, 2019 as presented – *motion carried*.
- 4) **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** No business to report.
- 5) **NEW BUSINESS:**
 - a) Wendy Falb of the Literacy Center of West Michigan – Wendy gave a presentation on the history and initiatives of the Literacy Center.
 - They started 30 years ago within an area of the Grand Rapids Public Library with a director and small volunteer staff. They have grown to the largest organization for literacy in the state and is one of the largest of their kind in the country.
 - Literacy is their primary focus, but they implement it in a few different initiatives. These include adult tutoring programs, family literacy programs, and customized workplace English with businesses.
 - They have partnered with GRPL and KDL in the past, especially with the adult tutoring programs, but have also had success in bringing family night activities to Grand Rapids Public Library.
 - They have also been involved with the Community Literacy Initiative that is a group made up of executives with the goal of changing policy and outcomes in a community that support literacy. Primary interest of that group was the role of adult literacy in passing those skills on to their children. They were involved, as were GRPL and KDL, in the Read at Home program, related to the 3rd grade reading law, but realized it would be too hard for some families to come on board if the parents had low literacy skills. The program involved professional development for staff by members of the ISD to focus on the 5 foundations of reading and connecting parents with teachers. GRPL and KDL wanted staff to be able to direct parents to easy resources that would support initiatives to increase reading skills. GRPL created activity bags that focused on the 5 needs and KDL provided booster packs with resources parents could use with their children.
 - The hardest thing they have found in these initiatives is how to get those with low literacy skills into their community libraries and feel at home or comfortable in the library. Schools can be key in this, but there hasn't been much collaboration due to the lack of resources. The other challenge is funding for these initiatives. The focus in schools has been more about work-force ready skills rather than developing learning skills that would enrich people's lives.
 - Her recommended focus for us would be family literacy since it is the key to success in other areas. Libraries usually do this around the country, but they haven't been very big programs and struggle financially to do it. She recognized that to have a successful program you need

the collaborator that can build trust with the families and serve as a connection between the schools and libraries, but it has been difficult to keep that structure in place.

- The Literacy Center is hosting a summit in February called “Ready to Read, Ready to Succeed: Developing Literacy Birth to Five.” The head of RIF will be their keynote speaker and they will be bringing in other resource experts.
 - Wendy finished the presentation with questions from the committee of which the biggest one was, what can the cooperative and our libraries (both big and small) do? She mentioned people are willing to do things with their family to support their success. Libraries can provide these opportunities through conversation clubs, story times and family activities that are aligned with programs for kids to get everyone in the family there and involved.
 - There are some smaller literacy organizations in West Michigan that we may want to include. The reach of the Literacy Center right now is generally in the greater Grand Rapids area except for some work programs with a few employers. She is willing to partner but could not guarantee leadership from her or her staff as their plate is already full and they would be stretched to take on much more.
 - Wendy mentioned the best outside resource we could look in to would be the National Center for Families Learning. In order to solve the low literacy problems, schools can’t do it alone and neither can libraries. They both need a regularly funded program to establish the bridge in the community.
- b) Next Steps – Discussion followed the presentation as to what the cooperative could focus on next.
- The consensus of the committee was to focus on 1 or 2 things we could do to increase family literacy that we could implement and do well.
 - Carol suggested having Kelly put together a time schedule for applying for Library of Michigan grants to share with committee members to get us a timeframe for bringing the plan together. More information will need to be researched so that we aren’t reinventing the wheel.
 - Marla mentioned about the Collective Impact Model, designed to bring schools, libraries, and businesses together to focus on a community mission. She mentioned KConnect as currently being in place, but it hasn’t worked all that well. Philadelphia has a great model and she will bring information to share with the committee.
 - Jackie shared that MADL, Hackley, and White Lake have partnered in a grant to do Family Place programs in all their locations. The focus of these programs is to involve parents in play with their children, but to be led and directed by trained staff to provide resources and interact with parents to help their children grow.
 - The committee needs to research what works and what hasn’t so that we can focus our attention on doing it right. Everyone was asked to research and bring one idea that may work to share with the rest of the committee at the next meeting.
 - Carol mentioned that the survey waiting to go out will be revised to include more broad questions and questions related to family literacy. She plans to have the survey go out in October.
 - Teresa said a report of our progress will be brought up at the next council meeting.
- 6) **NEXT MEETING:** Wednesday, October 30, 2019, 9:30 a.m. at Lakeland Library Cooperative
- 7) **ADJOURNMENT:** Bethany Nettleton moved, supported by Marla Ehlers, to adjourn at 11:04 a.m. - *motion carried.*